

Domantas

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The moment he saw that ungodly machine, he just knew everything was about to change.

He stepped in, reluctantly of course, on the orders of an agent who was standing in front of the machine, and the operators started doing their jibjab with the computers. A whirring noise soon followed, and it had seemed as though the light on the outside was evaporating into this machine, creating an uneasy feeling as what was inside and outside became blurred. And then it hit, like every piece of his body had been ripped apart and destroyed a thousand times over before being replaced. He let out a cry just to hear the whirring going faster, the light almost blinding, the pain just getting worse. Has the machine failed? Just moments later, the light came back into the world, but it was not the room of computers and agents, but instead an entirely new, unfamiliar, distant place. Traveling for the first time in human history across both space and time, Domantas had arrived at his destination at last- the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1626. Aside from being the first time traveler in history, Domantas wanted to get a more in depth look at a specific battle that prompted a major war in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He arrived in a forest, and according to the calculations just outside of the capital, Krakow. He had a bag of some food, water, a knife, and some other seemingly useless stuff. He began his descent to the capital, about a 1.5 mile hike,

nearly immediately after arrival. After 14 days, he needed to go back to the machine, to return home. The forest was beautiful, and the soft sounds of birds chirping was a very soothing sound. As he went further and further into the hike and began leaving the forest, the first signs of civilization were almost shocking. Of course Domantas knew that everything would be different. Obviously traveling back such a long period of time is gonna ensure huge changes for humanity, but still, he was taken aback. Still, he enters the city. Peasants doing work on the side of the street, just to feed their families wasn't an uncommon sight. Sewing, cleaning, building, you name it they were being worked on on the side of the street. Seemingly out of nowhere, a man shouts

“Ty! przybysz! Skąd jesteś?!” (You! Newcomer! Where are you from?!)

Domantas understood Polish, of course he learned for the trip. However, he wasn't prepared for somebody out of nowhere And besides, how could he explain where he was actually from? Stressing out, Domantas quickly replies “Tuż obok tego lasu.” (Right next to this forest.)

“Głupie gadanie. Jestem tam miejscowym, nigdy cię wcześniej nie widziałem” (Bullshit. I'm a local there, I've never seen you before)

Domantas begins to stress even harder, he had no clue what to say to this man. Could he fake his way out of it?

The man started shouting again “Panie, muszę wiedzieć, skąd pan pochodzi” (Sir, I need to know where you are from,”

Domantas coolly replies “Dlaczego?” (Why?)

“Mężczyzna wyglądający jak ty wywołał zamieszanie w moim barze” (A man who looks like you caused a stir in my bar)

“Jak to możliwe, że to byłem ja? Właśnie dotarłem.” (How was it possible that it was me? I just got here)

“Słusznie. Przepraszam za kłopot, czy mogę zaprosić Cię do mojego baru?” (Rightly. Sorry for the inconvenience, can I invite you to my bar?)

Domantas was curious about the offer. It seemed like a good way to learn about where he is, but is his Polish strong enough for this? He decides to take the offer anyway, and the man leads him down the street. After a long walk with several turns and a few suspicious turns into an alleyway, they finally reach the entrance . The man pulls out a key and unlocks the door, signaling Domantas to go in first. Domantas first steps in and immediately looks at a huge mural on the wall. A wooden counter and shelves upon shelves of *stuff* behind it, whether it be alcohol, cannabis, even art supplies and religious material. As Domantas looks around, more religious artworks are noticed on the walls.

The man notices Domantas' curiosity and immersement and calmly says

“Zapraszamy do Karczmy Szczepaniak! Widzę, że ci się podoba, co?” (Welcome to Szczepaniak Tavern! I can see you like it, no?)

“Tak, to niepodobne do niczego, co widziałem wcześniej” (Yes, it's unlike anything i've seen before)

“To jeden z najbogatszych pubów w okolicy.” (It's one of the most wealthy pubs in the area)

“Gdzie są wszyscy ludzie?” (Where are all the people?)

“Wojskowy. Jesteśmy bogaci umysłem, a nie bogactwem.” (Military. We are rich in mind, not wealth)

Domantas sits down, signaling to the man for a drink. The man complies, and gives him a water

The man starts talking again, “Wiem, że nie jesteś stąd. Skąd jesteś?” (I know you’re not from here. Where are you from?)

Domantas replies “Nie mogę tego powiedzieć, panie Szczepaniak. Przepraszam, ale muszę udać się tam, gdzie walczy wojsko.” (I cannot say that, Mr. Szczepaniak. I apologize, but I need to go to wherever the military is fighting.)

The man looks at Domantas curiously, before speaking again. “Proszę mówić do mnie Andrzej. Jeśli chcesz, mogę Cię zabrać na Litwę za około 6 dni” (Please, call me Andrzej, I can take you to Lithuania in 6 days if you want.)

“Proszę, zrób to i przepraszam za moje zapomnienie, ale co jest dzisiaj?” (Please do, and I apologize for my forgetfulness but what is the date?)

Andrzej looks at Domantas, again curiously, as though he was trying to look into his soul and find the truth. Domantas remained calm, but intrigued at this man.

“Jest 20 stycznia. Jeśli możesz, chodźmy za następną godzinę.” (it’s January 20rd. Let’s go in the next hour if possible)

“Jestem gotowy, kiedy tylko ty będziesz.” (I’m ready whenever you are)

Leaving the bar, Domantas was led a few street blocks down to a stable, where Andrzej had horses. They saddled up and were on the way very shortly after.

The next days were immense. Traveling across the Commonwealth, Domantas learned of Andrzej’s life. His wife was killed in a brawl in a restaurant just years earlier, and his son left him and his values to go marry the daughter of a powerful Lithuanian man.

Andrzej seemed to lose faith and trust in Domantas, finding his refusal to speak about his life as disturbing and suspicious. Domantas had a fear, this entire time, that he wouldn't be able to make it back to the machine in time, but deep down he knew it was safe. It wasn't a radical path or anything like that, and it seemed pretty easy to recreate. Arriving in Latvia, where the battle was to be held, Domantas prepared for the worst. He had with him a knife, and a basic flamethrower. Obviously, considering the times, he couldn't use the flamethrower unless it was a worst case scenario, but he had it prepared anyway, tying some string to his bug spray and lighter. He also had to begin properly rationing his food, as Andrzej's generosity would likely not be continued on the battlefield. The Swedes arrived, an ambush as expected, and just as the battle was beginning the Lithuanian commander suffered a nervous breakdown. The Swedes began to descend on the Polish army and Domantas took the initiative. Despite not knowing anybody here, he knew they were good people, and Domantas took out his knife and stood tall to stop the Swedes. The fighting commenced, and Domantas was fighting off the attackers. Although he was overrun after not long, his allies began to fight as well. Domantas was fighting strong, stopping the Swedes in their tracks, but his lack of leadership was evident. Polish-Lithuanian forces felt motivated, but without proper strategy it was a complete mess. Despite this, they still stood with Domantas, although after losing several hundred of their comrades they started to turn and run. Domantas, seeing this, began to order the people to leave while he stood back and attacked. A few stood with Domantas, but they soon fell too. Domantas felt this was it. feeling a stab in his side, he tried to walk backwards, stumbling and falling. Swedish

horses trampled him. Domantas couldn't die, not like this, not alone. He had a life, a family, a wife back at home.

"FUCK,"

was the only thing on his mind. He closed his eyes. In one last ditch effort to save himself, he pulled out the flamethrower, opening the lighter, but he didn't have enough force to push down on it. And yet he did, setting off a brilliant flame before blacking out.

He awoke at a military camp bed. His entire body ached, but he felt safe.

"Wreszcie się obudziłeś" (You're finally awake) said a familiar voice

"Andrzej?"

"Tak" (Yes)

Andrzej looked over Domantas with a serious tone

"Kim jesteś? Skąd pochodzisz?" (Who are you? Where are you from?)

Domantas was lost for words. How could he begin to explain the flamethrower? How much did Andrzej know? How much did anyone know? The only thing on his mind was the date. How long was he asleep? Could he make it back in time?

"Gdzie jesteśmy? Jaki mamy dziś dzień?" (Where are we? What day is it?)

"Najpierw mi odpowiedź." (Answer me first)

"NIE MOGĘ." (I CAN'T.)

Andrzej was taken aback. Domantas had randomly appeared, and then served as a leader in a major battle? Using unfamiliar technology and being awfully secretive about himself?? Despite these oddities, domantas had just stepped up and potentially saved their armies from a massacre..

"Jest 28 stycznia. jesteśmy w Wilnie" (It's January 28th, we're in Vilnius.)

Domantas broke out in tears. There was just one final chance to make it back in time, and if everything went wrong it would be absolutely dreadful.

“Proszę, zabierz mnie z powrotem do Krakowa” (Please, take me to Krakow)

“Nie mogę, jesteś kontuzjowany” (I can’t, you’re injured)

“nie obchodzi mnie to, proszę, muszę wracać do Krakowa” (I don’t care, please, i need to go back to Krakow)

Andrzej saw the determination in Domantas’ eyes, and reluctantly agreed. Upon getting into the horse carriage, Domantas used his first aid kit to clean out his wounds and reapply bandages and other medical stuff, and also took some painkillers. The carriage was silent for much of the ride, as Domantas spent much time sleeping and recovering, when suddenly on the third day the horse carriage broke down. It was over. Domantas couldn't even make a sound because he knew. Blankly staring at the wall, he dully listened when Andrzej said

“Nie zdążymy, musimy poczekać aż przyjdzie kolejna osoba” (We won't make it in time, we have to wait until the next person comes)

Domantas didn't reply. The color drained out of his face.

“Mogą to być dni” (It could be days)

Domantas was dead set on staring at the wall. He couldn't speak or move, he just sat there silently. A single tear fell down his cheek.

After nearly half an hour of just sitting like this, Domantas hatched a plan. He knew the route well enough, it wasn't too complicated.

“Pobiegnę przodem, dogoń mnie jak będziesz mógł.” (I’ll run ahead. Catch up to me when you can)

“Nie mogę ci na to pozwolić. Jesteś kontuzjowany i może minąć kilka dni, zanim wrócę na trasę” (I can't let you do that. You're injured and it may be a few days before I get back on the road)

“Już wiesz, co powiem, Andrzej” (You already know what I'm going to say, Andrzej)

Domantas started off ahead, desperate to make it back to Krakow in time. After about an hour he got tired, his injuries got the better of him and he collapsed. There was nothing for him to do but cry, and cry he did. He cried for himself, how he had failed his mission. He cried for his family, how he would never see them again. He cried and cried and cried, but out of pure spite and will he pushed forward. At the end of the day he set up his sleeping bag in a pretty private area and lay to rest. He dreamed of his wife and kids, who he last saw before leaving. He awoke to a carriage over him. Andrzej was back! Domantas hopped in the carriage and was back on his way. The days passed slower and slower as he couldn't wait to return home. Returning to Krakow, a very tired and hurting Domantas began his hike to the forest. He pushed through and at last he could see the machine, the embodiment of joy in Domantas' mind walking over there. He tripped over a tree root, and stuck out his arm to crawl, when it disappeared. Domantas couldn't take it. Everything had gone so wrong and so right, but this was just evil. He knew it was over. He pulled out his knife, and put it to his neck, before a blinding light appeared. The machine was back!! Domantas at last stepped in, turned on the machine, and sent it back to the present

In the modern day, it had been mere moments since Domantas walked into the machine. He came back bruised and bloodied, and was immediately tested for any diseases from the time, also the biggest issues were the stab wounds to his rib. His wife

saw him at the hospital, and he again burst out in tears of joy. The time machine was sparsely used after this, due to general fear and other lack of tests.

Andrzej's bar, the Szczepaniak Tavern later closed, as most of the people there had been drafted to the military and without customers the bar lost its money. Andrzej and Domantas both inspired each other, Andrzej becoming a traveling artist and writer who never revealed much about himself, and Domantas resigned from his governmental role to open a bar and a library, where he would celebrate works of fiction from both eastern europe and other 17th century literatures.